

HOOSIER WOMEN AT WORK

STUDIES IN INDIANA WOMEN'S HISTORY

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Seven Pearls in Action: Reflections on Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated and its Contributions to Indiana's Youth and Women

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Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. was founded November 12th, 1922 in Indianapolis, IN at Butler University. The founders – seven African American women who were passionate educators mobilized during a critically challenging era in Indiana's history to serve the community – specifically women and youth. While navigating the chilly climate of racially segregated communities and educational systems, these women were among the first to attend the predominantly white campus of Butler University through the quota system. Their common mission to promote educational equity for children and support women of color led to an array of philanthropic activities and advocacy in Indiana. These seven women leaders helped to shape numerous lives of Indiana residents while serving as educators, principals, and administrators in the Indianapolis Public School system and more. Many of their former students are successful professionals and notable citizens dedicated to our community now.

This paper will explore the role that Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. played in inciting change for women and youth in Indiana throughout its 93 years with emphasis on key efforts and events in its history. Soon to celebrate 100 years of scholarship, sisterhood and service internationally, Sigma Gamma Rho's roots are deeply planted in the heart of its founding city and state. These founders are among the notable women that should be celebrated as Hoosier women at work in Indiana's history.

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